A U M

For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.—*Book of Job, Chap. xxxiv, verse II.*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. IX **MARCH, 1921** **No. 5**

No Theosophical Society, as such, is responsible for any opinion or declaration in this magazine, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

Where any article, or statement, has the author's name attached, he alone is responsible, and for those which are unsigned, the Editors will be accountable.

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*

CHAPTER XIV

IT would appear from all the circumstances that Professor Coues had planned for various contingencies. He played upon the vanity, the jealousy and the fears of Colonel Olcott, as indicated in the extract given from Colonel Olcott's correspondence with him. He endeavored to flatter Mr. Judge and, that failing, to undermine him in the confidence of H. P. B., while still professedly working with Mr. Judge and his aids. He used the same arts with H. P. B. to entrap her into supporting his ambitions. All the time he was writing and talking with American Theosophists who might be misled by the glamour of his personality, his scientific standing and public reputation, trying to gain their confidence in himself, sowing doubts as to the ability and the good faith of H. P. B. and Mr. Judge. As he came to see that these tactics might fail he tried his arts on Mabel Collins and on Michael Angelo Lane. Side by side with these double-dealings, he was endeavoring to lay the foundations for the deception of the general public and those casually interested in the "mystical" and the "occult," that they might think himself to be a leading figure in the Theosophical world. We have seen his claims in regard to the numbers, the prestige, the "ramifications" of his "Gnostic" Branch at Washington, D. C., his boasts as to his own great abilities and "influence," and his connections with the press.

During the year 1888 and in 1889 there appeared numerous "interviews" and inspired articles in various papers, ostensibly in regard to Theosophy and "psychical powers," but in fact all of them devoted to laudations of Professor Coues. Just prior to the

*Corrections, objections, criticisms, questions and comments are invited from all readers on any facts or conclusions stated in this series.—EDITORS.

opening attack in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* he wrote a long communication to *Light,* allegedly on the subject of psychometry, which that periodical published with a warmly appreciative prefatory paragraph on Dr. Coues, in its issue of May 11th, 1889. In the course of this article Prof. Coues takes occasion to say:

"I am tempted to add one curious case which came up in some experiments conducted with . . . by myself. It so happens that I have more than once received by mail certain peculiar documents, written on Indian rice paper, sealed in gaily coloured envelopes, and enclosed in ordinary letters from certain parties whose names would be familiar to the public should I give them. In fine, these are 'Mahatma' or 'Thibetan' letters, supposed to emanate from his Highness Koot Hoomi, or some other equally majestic adept. They contain, as a rule, unexceptionally moral maxims and exhortations to virtue, coupled with more specific instructions for the conduct of the Theosophical Society over which I am supposed to preside. I am tolerably familiar with the ins and outs of esoteric hocus-pocus, and never for a moment supposed these missives to be other than bogus. . . .

"In point of fact, this particular letter was mailed to me from New York, and I have no question that it was penned by a gentleman in that city. . . . Will not Madame Blavatsky kindly come to the rescue?"

Light for May 18, 1889, contains a brief but pointed letter from H. P. B. She says:

"To my certain knowledge Professor Coues has *never* received any letter from the individual known as Koot Hoomi. . . . The letters which Professor Coues claims to have received, if they purport to come from Mahatma 'K. H.' must be of the same stamp as the clumsy forgery which was published in the Chicago *Tribune* last year over the signature of 'K. H.' and has caused to many other Theosophists and myself extreme annoyance. This bogus production Professor Coues himself describes in a recent letter as a silly joke of a newspaper man, with which he assures me he had nothing to do. Strange to say, however, The *Tribune* letter bore the *facsimile* of a seal on a ring I have worn for over fifteen years, and with which Professor Coues is well acquainted. . . .

"Was it necessary that Professor Coues who aspires to become the President of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, should so wantonly and flippantly drag in the mire of his irony a name which, if it says nothing to him, is loved and respected by so many of his brother Theosophists?"

Then followed the Coues-Collins attacks. Violent as was the storm within the Society and the Esoteric Section, the pamphlets issued so thoroughly exposed the falsity of the charges made that Mabel Collins retired into an obscurity from which she did not venture to emerge for many years. Her sole further contribution

to the fray was her novel, "Morial the Mahatma," a thinly disguised portrayal of a woman, part fanatic and part trickster, the tool of designing and lurid "Black Magicians" posing as "White Adepts." It is evident to anyone even casually acquainted with the situation that they are intended to picture H. P. B. and the Mahatmas "M.," and "K. H."

Failing miserably to disrupt or even seriously to disturb the T. S. or the Esoteric Section for any length of time, Professor Coues continued zealously his plan to pose as the Head of the only real "Theosophical" movement and to delude the public mind. In *Light* for November 9, 1889, appears a very formal communication from him, addressed to the Editor, as follows:

"Sir—Permit me to correct the false statements which have been made in various quarters to the effect that the above named organisation, 'The Gnostic Theosophical Society of Washington,' is extinct. As its founder and president, I am fully informed on the question. The *Gnostic Theosophical Society* was never stronger nor more active than it is to-day. Its memberships and ramifications extend into nearly every State in the Union. Since October, 1886, when it was formally dissolved, as an association in any way dependent upon another of similar name, and immediately reformed upon an independent basis, it has steadily grown in strength and influence, as well as in numbers. To the quiet, systematic, and effectual operations of the Gnostic is entirely due the train of events in matters theosophical with which the public is now familiar. As a body of researchers in psychic science the Gnostics may, perhaps, be compared favorably with like associations, and we desire especially to accentuate the fact that we repudiate and disclaim all connection with certain persons whose names have hitherto been identified by the public with the movement commonly called 'Theosophical.'

"Elliott Coues, President, &c."

In other publications from time to time Professor Coues represented himself, or was represented, as "Perpetual President of the Esoteric Theosophical Society of America." How much of truth there was in all these claims has already been shown. By comparing the date given by Dr. Coues when the "Gnostic Theosophical Society of Washington" was "formally dissolved . . . and immediately reformed upon an independent basis"—October, 1886, as he gives it—with the fact that the "Gnostic" *Branch* was dischartered by the American Section of the T. S., and Dr. Coues *expelled* from membership in the Theosophical Society in June, 1889, another illustration of his lack of veracity and straightforwardness may be drawn. After the expulsion of Dr. Coues and the cancellation of the charter of the "Gnostic" Branch neither it nor any other "theosophical" society or organization ever existed in any connection with Prof. Coues other than in his imagination, and his claims in those respects were pure inventions.

When the American Sectional Convention met at Chicago at the end of April, 1890, Mr. Judge's Report as General Secretary contained the following reference to Professor Coues:

"During the past year there has been no appeal to the Executive Committee from any Branch or individual, and but one case of discipline. On June 11th (1888) formal charges of untheosophic conduct were preferred by Mr. Arthur B. Griggs of Boston against Dr. Elliott Coues, of Washington. These charges were in part based on public imputations by Dr. Coues of fraud and falsehood to Madame Blavatsky, and in part upon unpublished letters in which the Theosophical Society, its teachings, aims, and officers, were treated as shams and deceits. I officially sent a copy of these charges to Dr. Coues in a registered letter, notifying him of the date when the Executive Committee would be prepared to hear his defense. During the intervening time no reply was received, and the Committee, having considered the charges, adjudged them sustained, by a unanimous vote, and on June 22d expelled Dr. Coues from the Theosophical Society. Later events have conclusively shown that it is better for its enemies to be placed without its pale than permitted to remain within it. From this decision there has been no appeal to Col. Olcott, and therefore it is final."

The Theosophical community having thus disembarrassed itself of the traitor within the household, and placed on record its action, Dr. Coues prepared his final thunderbolt. In the New York *Sun* for Sunday, June 1, 1890, the leading editorial article was entitled, "The Humbug of Theosophy." We give it here in full:

"The exposure of the imposture of Mme. BLAVATSKY does not seem to lessen at all the prosperity of her humbug religion.

"The last annual report of the Theosophical Society tells us that fifteen additional branches have been formed in this country during the year. They are chiefly in towns on the Pacific coast, where the clap-trap philosophy is flourishing, more especially at the moment. The total number of branches is now thirty-six, and they are organized in nearly all the great towns of the Northern States; but at the South the humbug has gained no hold except at St. Louis, where there are said to be two societies.

"The number of new members admitted during the year was 373, and there was one expulsion, Dr. ELLIOTT COUES of Washington. He is a man of scientific reputation, who showed up the lying and trickery of the BLAVATSKY woman after having been one of her dupes for several years. With her closer intimates she seems to make little attempt to conceal her real character as a charlatan, and her hearty contempt for their folly in taking her seriously. Her long success in keeping up the humbug is, therefore, all the more astonishing. Whether her principal disciple, Col. OLCOTT, is also playing a fraudulent part, it is hard to say. He seems to be very much in earnest, and as she seems to despise him thoroughly

and undisguisedly, laughing at his antics, it is perhaps presumable that he is honest and sincere in his credulity. He treats the snuffy old woman as a veritable seeress, and reads her mystical writings with apparent and probably real veneration, though she has described him to her old confederate, Mme. COULOMB, as a muff of the first water. Dr. COUES is of very different stuff, and he did not hesitate to banter her on the success of her trickery. He seems to have seen through her at an early day, and the wonder is that a man of his standing remained in her crowd so long.

"Yet among her followers are some people of rather more than usual intelligence, and at one time there was quite a theosophical craze in Boston itself. We observe, too, that among the officers of English branches are two women of title, and the President of the Blavatsky Lodge is Mrs. ANNIE BESANT, who has turned from complete infidelity to rank credulity, accepting the hodge-podge of theosophy as a divine revelation, though the humbug of it was exposed to the light before she took it up.

Mme. BLAVATSKY has the assurance to write to her American dupes that her charlatanism is prospering more than ever, financially and otherwise. She addresses them from a sick chamber, to which she is confined by a mortal disease, and yet she persists in her determination to keep the imposture going until the end. She is an old woman of wonderful will power and of unquestionable intellectual ability. What the motive of her course is, we cannot imagine, unless it be mere love of fun and mischief. It evidently pleases her to make fools of people, and she is likely to go down to history as one of the chief impostors of our day. Whether theosophy will die with her is very doubtful. It has a fascination for a certain class of minds fond of mysticism; and its Buddhistic element is getting to be fashionable at this period.

"The sort of stuff enjoyed by the theosophists is shown by the titles of subjects proposed for discussion in the Brooklyn society: 'Iagrata, Swapna, and Sushcepti,' 'The Song of Life,' 'Re-incarnation,' 'Thought Transference' and 'Selflessness.' The annual report also contains essays by men and women on such themes, and we have rarely seen more undiluted nonsense printed. There is endless talk about 'soul,' 'planes,' 'inner chambers,' 'pure spirit,' 'occultism,' and 'cycles'; but it is very plain that the writers have no definite notion of what it all means. Nobody knows exactly what this theosophy is with which Mme. BLAVATSKY amuses herself. She makes it unexplainable on the shrewd principle that the mistier it is the more attractive it will be to the sort of people she is able to humbug. For the most part they seem to be women in whom the religious instinct is strong, whose old religious beliefs have been shattered by modern discussion. They like it because it is nonsense, mystery, jugglery, and a jumble of philosophical abstractions which they are powerless to reduce to order.

"The men in the business strike us as being made up of arrant

humbugs and superficial fellows whom anything like abstract thought drives substantially crazy. But they have succeeded in inducing thousands to take them seriously as profound philosophers."

This ignoble consideration of Madame Blavatsky, her teachings and her students, was followed, on Sunday, July 20, 1890, by a full-page special article from its Washington correspondent in the form of an interview with Prof. Coues. The editorial page of the *Sun* of the same date contained as its leading article, a still more undignified and disreputable treatment of the subject under the caption, "The History of a Humbug." It is, in full, as follows:

"We publish to-day a wonderfully interesting history of the invention of the humbug of Theosophy. It is related by Prof. ELLIOTT COUES of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, an ornithologist of distinction, who at one time was deceived by Mme. BLAVATSKY'S pretensions, but since has discovered her to be the impostor she is.

"This woman is by birth a Russian subject, and is now about 60 years of age, though she looks and pretends to be much older. She is fat, gross, of abominable habits, an intolerable temper, swearing like a pirate and smoking like a chimney, of restless energy and endless craft. Very little is known of her early days, when she was Mlle. HAHN, except that she was married to the Russian whose name she still bears, though she soon left him and entered upon her career of adventure without preserving any prejudices so far as matrimony is concerned.

"In other words, her morals may be theosophic, but they are bad. Since she lost her youth she has been living by her wits, sharpened by much experience of travel and the friction of many years of vagabondage. Her profession, so far as she has had any stated employment, has been as a Russian spy. As such, Prof. COUES tells us, she came to New York in 1873, and in that capacity she subsequently went to India with Col. OLCOTT as her faithful attendant. The device of theosophy was simply contrived by her as a cover for her real designs.

"This confirms the theory of her imposture which was advanced after she had been exposed by an investigating committee of the London Society for Psychical Research. That exposure was complete. It was proved beyond a doubt that, with Mme. COULOMB, a French woman, as a confederate, and with the assistance of the mechanical ingenuity of M. COULOMB, she kept up a pretended correspondence with a supernatural KOOT HOOMI, deceiving her dupes by the baldest jugglery. The old witch, according to Prof. COUES, was doing it all for no other purpose than to kick up a dust to hide her political intrigues. But she was not so sharp as she thought; the Russian Government stopped her pay, and she was driven to using her theosophical imposture itself as a means of making a living. As to OLCOTT, who began his career in the secret

service of our own War Department, Prof. COUES seems to think that he is not the wholly guileless and gullible fool he appears, at least not now. Poor fellow, he is in BLAVATSKY'S clutches and he cannot escape, though he has found her out as a harridan and a humbug. Accordingly he is perforce a humbug himself.

"It is a wonderful story how this crafty Tartar entrapped this shrewd Yankee, so that for fifteen years they have together played their game of humbugging people into believing that they are the prophets of a new religion founded on Asiatic wisdom, of which they are both together totally ignorant. Their trickery has been exposed with scientific completeness and exactitude, and yet their impudence is in no wise lessened. They keep straight faces and go on with their humbug, cheered and encouraged, of course, by the folly of men and women who take them seriously.

"Prof. COUES' narrative in form and substance makes capital reading."

The Coues interview fills seven closely printed columns of small type. The charges made and the alleged evidence procured by Professor Coues ostensibly exposed the facts of H. P. B.'s career from 1857-onwards. It is worth while for the student to observe these putative facts in the *Sun* articles, for they cover every case included in the multitude of attacks before and since upon H. P. B. and Theosophy, and the sequel shows their untruthfulness and the basic ignorance or dishonesty of those who make and repeat those charges.

On the statements of Daniel Dunglas Home, the medium, and W. Emmette Coleman, Dr. Coues charged H. P. B. with having been a member of the *demi-monde* of Paris in 1857-58 and the mistress of the Prince Emile de Wittgenstein, "by whom she had a deformed son, who died at Kieff in 1868."

On the strength of the statement of Mr. Richard Hodgson of S. P. R. fame, she is charged with "having shared the fortunes" of one Metrovitch in Cairo in 1871. This is said to be provable by Madame Coulomb and to be "the key to the power Coulomb had over Blavatsky." This charge is further supported by a letter from Madame Coulomb to Colonel Bundy of the *R-P-Journal,* and is the charge hinted at by Madame Coulomb at the close of the preface to her pamphlet against H. P. B. in 1884, but which she feared to make publicly in India.

The next charge definitely makes H. P. B. out a Russian spy from 1873 on. Then she is charged to have been "exploiting as a spiritualist medium" during her five years at New York, and before that at Cairo. Hudson Tuttle, a spiritualist, is quoted as sponsor for an attack on Mr. Judge. In gambler's terms Prof. Coues characterizes Theosophy, H. P. B., Col. Olcott and Mr. Judge as "three-card monte with king, queen and knave. Blavatsky dealt, Olcott steered, Judge played capper."

"'Then there is nothing but fraud on the one hand and folly on the other in this Theosophical Society?' said the reporter."

"'Absolutely nothing else, not even the pretense of anything else among those who conduct the affair,' responded the Professor."

Madame Blavatsky's authorship of "Isis Unveiled" is declared to be a fiction and on the authority of "a friend of mine" the real author is claimed to be the Baron de Palm, who was a member of the Society in its earliest days and the cremation of whose body was the first in the United States. The de Palm story is told at length in Col. Olcott's "Old Diary Leaves." Prof. Coues goes on to declare, "similar, yet different frauds are the root, stock and branch of other theosophical books."

The Report of the Society for Psychical Research is then taken up, and Dr. Coues affirms:

"The London Society for Psychical Research determined to send one of their number to Madras. Dr. Hodgson went to India in November, 1884, and stayed until April, 1885. The result of his investigation was the total collapse of the theosophic fake, and there has not yet been found leather enough in the lungs of all the fakirs combined to reinflate the bubble. Dr. Hodgson's report is elaborate, circumstantial and conclusive. Its force has never been and never will be broken. It is a volume of several hundred pages, with diagrams of the trap-doors on the Blavatsky stage, and facsimiles of Blavatsky's handwriting proved to be identical with that of the mythical Koot Hoomi. It shows that the Coulombs, whatever their own characters, and whatever their animus or purpose, had told the plain, simple truth as far as their disclosures went. Their evidence had already damned the woman; Hodgson's report sealed, certified and executed that sentence."

H. P. B., Col. Olcott, and Mr. Judge are repeatedly charged with being in the Society for money and that it is run for revenue only. Michael Angelo Lane's exploits are then referred to and he is made sponsor for stories of bogus Mahatmic messages "in very good imitation of the things Mr. Judge has been in the habit of distributing to favorite dupes—these themselves being in imitation of the rice paper missives of Blavatsky's original hoax."

"'How about those "Mahatmic" letters we heard so much about a while ago, such a one, for example, as the Chicago *Tribune* published in facsimile?' asked the reporter."

"Oh, you mean those Aids to Faith in Blavatsky which went the rounds? Here are a couple. They are at your service if you wish to print them. . . . The subject of the communication is simply bosh, as you perceive; the handwriting is almost unquestionably that of Mr. Judge, who is an expert penman."

Professor Coues then renews the "Kiddle incident" charges as to the source of the Mahatma letters in "The Occult World," and concludes: "Such is the unspeakably puerile nonsense upon

which the Mahatmic myth is erected. Papers prepared for no more cause or consequence than these flimsy forgeries I have obtained from Mr. Judge, and by Blavatsky or some other blatherskite, have made much theosophic history. . . . I could say more but I trust you appreciate the blessing of having two such authentic and impressive missives from beyond the Himalayas in your vest pocket—from as far beyond those heights as Mr. Judge's office in New York—precisely."

In view of the facts one scarce knows to which to award the palm for sheer audacity and effrontery—whether for his admission to Mr. Judge that the *Tribune* "Mahatmic message" came from himself and his claim in the same letter to Mr. Judge: "I *saw* that letter of which you complain fall down from the air"; whether for his point-blank denial in his letter to H. P. B. that he had anything whatever to do with the *Tribune* "message" and his explanation that it was "a piece of newspaper wit," or for his declaration in the *Sun* article that this and other "Mahatmic" messages were frauds of Mr. Judge's in imitation of similar frauds of H. P. B.'s.

Following the *Sun* articles, Mr. Judge in the "Path" for August, 1890, advised all whom it might concern that he had brought suit for libel. Manifestly he had done this only for the protection of the Society and the good name of H. P. B., and to head off similar attacks in other publications, for he himself had been mentioned only incidentally and as rather dupe and tool than arch-deceiver, and the same as to Colonel Olcott. In his notice Mr. Judge made the significant statement:

"The animus of the writer is so plainly disclosed that it might well serve as an ample answer to the attack. Inasmuch, however, as certain moral charges cannot be permitted utterance with impunity, I have brought suit for libel . . . and am awaiting instructions from Madame Blavatsky as to her own course."

In the "Path" for September, 1890, is printed a letter from Madame Blavatsky whose tone and spirit is in shining contrast with the course and animus of her caluminators. The letter reads:

"While I fully agree to the proposition that we should forgive our enemies, yet I do not thereby lose my 'appeal unto Caesar,' and in that appeal, which is now made to the Law and not to the Emperor, I may keep the command to forgive, while for the protection of the name of a dead friend and the security in the future of Theosophists, I hale into the Courts of the land those who, having no sense of what is right or just, see fit to publish broadcast wicked and unfounded slanders.

"For some fifteen years I have calmly stood by and seen my good name assailed by newspaper gossips who delight to dwell upon the personal peculiarities of those who are well known, and have worked on for the spread of our Theosophical ideas, feeling confident that, though I might be assailed by small minds who try their

best to bring me into reproach, the Society which I helped to found would withstand the attacks, and, indeed, grow under them. This latter has been the case. It may be asked by some members why I have never replied to those attacks which were directed against Occultism and phenomena. For two reasons: Occultism will remain forever, no matter how assailed, and Occult phenomena can never be proved in a Court of Law during this century. Besides, I have never given public currency to any of the latter, but have always objected to the giving out of things the profane cannot understand.

"But now a great metropolitan daily in New York, with no knowledge of the facts in the case, throws broadcast before the public many charges against me, the most of which meet their refutation in my life over a decade. But as one of them reflects strongly upon my moral character and brings into disrepute the honorable name of a dead man, an old family friend, it is impossible for me to remain silent, and so I have directed my lawyers in New York to bring an action against the 'N. Y. Sun' for libel.

"This paper accuses me of being a member of the *demi-monde* in '58 and '68 and of having improper relations with Prince Emile Wittgenstein, by whom the paper says I had an illegitimate son.

"The first part of the charge is so ridiculous as to arouse laughter, but the second and third hold others up to reprobation. Prince Wittgenstein, now dead, was an old friend of my family, whom I saw for the last time when I was eighteen years old, *i. e.*, in 1849, and he and his wife remained until his death in close correspondence with me. He was a cousin of the late Empress of Russia, and little thought that upon his grave would be thrown the filth of a modern New York newspaper. This insult to him and to me I am bound by all dictates of my duty to repel, and am also obliged to protect the honor of all Theosophists who guide their lives by the teachings of Theosophy; hence my appeal to the Law and to a jury of my fellow Americans. I gave up my allegiance to the Czar of Russia in the hope that America would protect her citizens; may that hope not prove vain. H. P. B."

At the time, the *Sun*—founded by Charles A. Dana, himself in earlier days the friend and admirer of H. P. B. and her work—was perhaps the most widely circulated and influential of American newspapers. It had at its command every resource of ability, influence and money and it is not to be supposed that it was unfamiliar with the technicalities of the New York State laws relating to libel or the difficulties in the way of any one who might try to obtain a verdict against it in such a suit. It had but to establish in court its own good faith and prove or show reasonable cause for belief in and circulation of a single one of its major charges, and the whole history of American jurisprudence in similar cases showed that it would be acquitted. But one thing favored the suit of H. P. B.: The fact that this time, quite the contrary of the

Coulomb charges, the S. P. R. report, and the numerous prior attacks upon her and her mission—*this time the charges were direct, made as statements of fact, not of opinion, hearsay, conclusion, inference or innuendo.* If H. P. B. was actually *guilty* of a single one of the offenses charged against her, she was ruined, ineradically branded with the stigma of a convicted rogue—her enemies triumphant, her Society exploded, her followers buried in ignominy, her mission and her "Theosophy" a thing of contempt and of derision.

The issue was squarely joined, with no possibility of evasion by either party to the suit. This time it was not a friendless and slandered woman forced into the position where she must suffer in silence or essay the *hopeless task of proving herself innocent* of the fabrications of irresponsible evil- and malicious-minded assassins of her good name. It was a great and powerful newspaper faced with the simple task of *proving her guilty* of a single one of its numerous charges by the simple process of bringing into Court in its behalf the Coues, the Bundys, the Hodgsons, the Coulombs, the Colemans, the Sidgwicks, the Myers, the Masseys, the Lillies, the Collins, and all the other still living "witnesses" who had fathered or circulated the "evidence" which for so many years had been industriously spread before the public to "prove" H. P. B. a fraud, her phenomena bogus, her teachings a theft or a plagiarism. Certainly, on the assumption that at some time in her life H. P. B. had been indiscreet in her relations with men, at some time participant in questionable transactions, at some time engaged in anything disreputable, at some time party to fraudulent phenomena, at some time profiting by her "hoax," the task before the *Sun* was an easy one.

The case was pressed with the utmost vigor by H. P. B.'s attorneys, but the usual "law's delays" were invoked and advantaged of in the defense. In the "Path" for March, 1891, a statement of the then status of the suit was published under the caption, "The Libel Suits Against N. Y. Sun and Elliott Coues." The article reads:

"Several letters inquiring about these suits having been received, and various rumors about them having arisen, facts are given.

"It is not possible to bring any suit to trial in New York very quickly, as all the calendars are crowded and suitors have to await their turn.

"It is not possible in New York to have newspapers notice the progress of suits for libel against other newspapers, as an agreement exists between the various editors that no such publication will be made. Hence the silence about the above-mentioned actions.

"The actions were begun in earnest and are awaiting trial. They will be continued until a verdict is reached or a retraction given.

"One victory has been gained in this way. The N. Y. *Sun* put in a long answer to Mme. Blavatsky's complaint and her lawyers demurred to its sufficiency as a defence. That question of law was argued before Judge Beach in the Supreme Court, and on the argument *the lawyer for the Sun confessed in open court their inability to prove the charge of immorality on which the suit lies,* and asked to be allowed to retain the mass of irrelevant matter in the answer. These matters could only have been meant to prejudice a jury. But Judge Beach sustained Mme. Blavatsky's objection and ordered the objectionable matter be stricken out. The case now looks merely like one in which the only question will be the amount of damages, and everything must now stand until the case is reached in the Trial Term. This decision on the demurrer was a substantial victory. The suit against Dr. Elliott Coues is in exactly the same condition."

Madame Blavatsky died in May of the same year—1891—and, under the Laws of New York, her death automatically terminated the suit brought by her against the *Sun*. Mr. Judge, however, continued to press his own suit, although the allegations originally made against himself were rather ridicule than slander. Finally, on September 26, 1892, the *Sun*, which by this time had become convinced of the great wrong perpetrated through it, voluntarily published, in partial amends, an editorial article repudiating the Coues interview, and a long article by Mr. Judge devoted to a tribute to the life-work and character of H. P. Blavatsky. The editorial retraction reads:

"We print on another page an article in which Mr. WILLIAM Q. JUDGE deals with the romantic and extraordinary career of the late Madame HELENA P. BLAVATSKY. We take occasion to observe that on July 20, 1890, we were misled into admitting into THE SUN'S columns an article by Dr. E. F. COUES of Washington, in which allegations were made against Madame BLAVATSKY'S character, and also against her followers, which appear to have been without solid foundation. Mr. JUDGE'S article disposes of all questions relating to Madame BLAVATSKY as presented by Dr. COUES, and we desire to say that his allegations respecting the Theosophical Society and Mr. JUDGE personally are not sustained by evidence, and should not have been printed."

As it is probable that few Theosophical students of the present day have ever seen the article written by Mr. Judge on H. P. B. at the invitation of the *Sun*, and included as part of its editorial retraction by the words "Mr. Judge's article disposes of all questions relating to Madame Blavatsky as presented by Dr. Coues," we republish, in another place in this issue of THEOSOPHY, under its original title, "The Esoteric She," the contribution by Mr. Judge in the *Sun* of the date named, September 26, 1892. The article itself, and the accompanying editorial endorsement and retraction, should be contrasted with the two editorials from the *Sun* first quoted in the present chapter and with the Coues charges, in order

fully to realize the complete reversal of its position by the *Sun*. This can be accounted for only on two grounds (a) that the *Sun* after vigorous and sustained efforts to find evidence to justify even one of its charges found that the charges to which it had lent its support were mere calumnies, and (b) that its publishers were men honorable enough to voluntarily make amends for the wrong done by publishing a retraction, even after the death of H. P. B. had freed them from all risk of damages, no matter what charges they might have chosen to make.

Theosophists, out of loyalty and gratitude to H. P. B. who brought them—at what cost to herself we have partly seen—the message of Theosophy, would do well to inform themselves fully on the Coues-Collins and *Sun* case, for they cover every accusation ever hurled at H. P. B.'s good name and fame; they constitute the only case where the charges were made directly, and not by opinion, suggestion, inference and insinuation, by a responsible channel. The outcome of the case constitutes an absolute vindication of H. P. B. and an equally emphatic condemnation of the bad faith or the knowledge of those who have since repeated those slanders. Within the last year, from high sources, one or another of the Coues-Collins-*Sun* charges have been repeated and have gained very wide publicity because of the supposed high character of the parties making them—"Margot Tennant" (wife of Herbert Asquith, ex-prime minister of Great Britain, in her "Intimate Diary") and the late Count Witte, formerly for many years one of the leading ministers of the Russian Empire under the *regime* of the late Czar. Count Witte was a cousin of H. P. B., but as he was many years her junior, he knew her only as a boy and saw her but a few times. In his recently published "Memoirs" the old charges of immorality first directly made by Coues and the *Sun* are circumstantially repeated. He does not profess to speak from knowledge, but for the same inscrutable reasons that have prompted so many others, does not hesitate to repeat these abominable calumnies at second-hand. The outcome of the *Sun* case gives the lie to the Witte slanders upon the dead. Students may be interested to know that Count Witte's own mother, a devoted member of the orthodox Greek Catholic Church, remained to her dying day the warm friend and champion of H. P. B. Vile as must be considered the characters of those who originate or circulate unverified base charges against the living, they are respectable in comparison with those who continue to revile the defenseless dead.

After the battle in the *Sun* and its sequence, Dr. Coues fled ingloriously from the field; his "Gnostic" society melted away like a shadow, his prestige waned and he died in obscurity in 1899. His "Esoteric Theosophical Society" exists only as a forgotten echo of his own bombast and pretense and his name survives among theosophical students as a mere synonym for surpassing egotism. After the *Sun* retraction he never again ventured to thrust himself on public attention as an "occultist."

(To be Continued)

THE ESOTERIC SHE*

The Late Mme. Blavatsky—A Sketch of Her Career
by William Quan Judge.

A WOMAN who, for one reason or another, has kept the world—first her little child world and afterward two hemispheres—talking of her, disputing about her, defending or assailing her character and motives, joining her enterprise or opposing it might and main, and in her death being as much telegraphed about between two continents as an emperor, must have been a remarkable person. Such was Mme. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, born under the power of the holy Tzar, in the family of the Hahns, descended on one side from the famous crusader, Count Rottenstern, who added Hahn, a cock, to his name because that bird saved his life from a wily Saracen who had come into his tent to murder him.

Hardly any circumstance or epoch in Mme. Blavatsky's career was prosaic. She chose to be born into this life at Ekaterinoslaw, Russia, in the year 1831, when coffins and desolation were everywhere from the plague of cholera. The child was so delicate that the family decided upon immediate baptism under the rites of the Greek Catholic Church. This was in itself not common, but the ceremony was—under the luck that ever was with Helena—more remarkable and startling still. At this ceremony all the relatives are present and stand holding lighted candles. As one was absent a young child, aunt of the infant Helena, was made proxy for the absentee, and given a candle like the rest. Tired out by the effort, this young proxy sank down to the floor unnoticed by the others, and, just as the sponsors were renouncing the evil one on the babe's behalf, by three times spitting on the floor, the sitting witness with her candle accidentally set fire to the robes of the officiating priest, and instantly there was a small conflagration, in which many of those present were seriously burned. Thus amid the scourge of death in the land was Mme. Blavatsky ushered into our world, and in the flames baptized by the priests of a Church whose fallacious dogmas she did much in her life to expose.

She was connected with the rulers of Russia. Speaking in 1881, her uncle, Gen. Fadeef, joint Councillor of State of Russia, said that, as daughter of Col. Peter Hahn, she was grand-daughter of Gen. Alexis Hahn von Rottenstern Hahn of old Mecklenburg stock, settled in Russia, and on her mother's side daughter of Hèlene Fadeef and grand-daughter of Princess Helena Dolgorouky. Her maternal ancestors were of the oldest families in Russia and direct descendants of the Prince or Grand Duke Rurik, the first ruler of Russia. Several ladies of the family belonged to the impe-

*First printed in the New York *Sun*, September 26, 1892.

rial house, becoming Czarinas by marriage. One of them, a Dolgorouky, married the grandfather of Peter the Great, and another was betrothed to Czar Peter II. Through these connections it naturally resulted that Mme. Blavatsky was acquainted personally with many noble Russians. In Paris I met three princes of Russia and one well-known General, who told of her youth and the wonderful things related about her then; and in Germany I met the Prince Emile de Wittgenstein of one of the many Russo-German families, and himself cousin to the Empress of Russia and aide-de-camp to the Czar, who told me that he was an old family friend of hers, who heard much about her in early years, but, to his regret, had never had the fortune to see her again after a brief visit made with her father to his house. But he joined her famous Theosophical Society by correspondence, and wrote, after the war with Turkey, that he had been told in a letter from her that no hurt would come to him during the campaign, and such turned out to be the fact.

As a child she was the wonder of the neighborhood and the terror of the simpler serfs. Russia teems with superstitions and omens, and as Helena was born on the seventh month and between the 30th and 31st day, she was supposed by the nurses and servants to have powers and virtues possessed by no one else. And these supposed powers made her the cynosure of all in her early youth. She was allowed liberties given none others, and as soon as she could understand she was given by her nurses the chief part in a mystic Russian ceremony performed about the house and grounds on the 30th of July with the object of propitiating the house demon. The education she got was fragmentary, and in itself so inadequate as to be one more cause among many for the belief of her friends in later life that she was endowed with abnormal psychic powers, or else in verity assisted by those unseen beings who she asserted were her helpers and who were men living on the earth, but possessed of developed senses that laughed at time and space. In girlhood she was bound by no restraint of conventionality, but rode any Cossack horse in a man's saddle, and later on spent a long time with her father with his regiment in the field, where, with her sister, she became the pet of the soldiers. In 1844, when 14, her father took her to London and Paris, where some progress was made in music, and before 1848 she returned home.

Her marriage in 1848 to Gen. Nicephore Blavatsky, the Governor of Erivan in the Caucasus, gave her the name of Blavatsky, borne till her death. This marriage, like all other events in her life, was full of pyrotechnics. Her abrupt style had led her female friends to say that she could not make the old Blavatsky marry her, and out of sheer bravado she declared she could, and sure enough, he did propose and was accepted. Then the awful fact obtruded itself on Helena's mind that this could not—in Russia—be undone. They were married, but the affair was signalized by Mme. Blavat-

sky's breaking a candlestick over his head and precipitately leaving the house, never to see him again. After her determination was evident, her father assisted her in a life of travel which began from that date, and not until 1858 did she return to Russia. Meanwhile her steps led her to America in 1851, to Canada, to New Orleans, to Mexico, off to India, and back again in 1853 to the United States. Then her relatives lost sight of her once more until 1858, when her coming back was like other events in her history. It was a wintry night, and a wedding party was on at the home in Russia. Guests had arrived, and suddenly, interrupting the meal, the bell rang violently, and there, unannounced, was Mme. Blavatsky at the door.

From this point the family and many friends testify, both by letter and by articles in the *Rebus,* a well-known journal in Russia, and in other papers, a constant series of marvels wholly unexplainable on the theory of jugglery was constantly occurring. They were of such a character that hundreds of friends from great distances were constantly visiting the house to see the wonderful Mme. Blavatsky. Many were incredulous, many believed it was magic, and others started charges of fraud. The superstitious Gooriel and Mingrelian nobility came in crowds and talked incessantly after, calling her a magician. They came to see the marvels others reported, to see her sitting quietly reading while tables and chairs moved of themselves and low raps in every direction seemed to reply to questions. Among many testified to was one done for her brother, who doubted her powers. A small chess table stood on the floor. Very light—a child could lift it and a man break it. One asked if Mme. Blavatsky could fasten it by will to the floor. She then said to examine it, and they found it loose. After that, and being some distance off, she said, "Try it again." They then found that no power of theirs could stir it, and her brother supposing from his great strength that this "trick" could easily be exposed, embraced the little table and shook and pulled it without effect, except to make it groan and creak. So with wall and furniture rapping, objects moving, messages about distant happenings arriving by aerial port, the whole family and neighborhood were in a constant state of excitement. Mme. Blavatsky said herself that this was a period when she was letting her psychic forces play, and learning fully to understand and control them.

But the spirit of unrest came freshly again, and she started out once more to find, as she wrote to me, "the men and women whom I want to prepare for the work of a great philosophical and ethical movement that I expect to start in a later time." Going to Spezzia in a Greek vessel, the usual display of natural circumstances took place, and the boat was blown up by an explosion of gunpowder in the cargo. Only a few of those on board were saved, she among them. This led her to Cairo, in Egypt, where, in 1871, she started a society with the object of investigating spiritualism

so as to expose its fallacies, if any, and to put its facts on a firm, scientific, and reasonable basis, if possible. But it only lasted fourteen days, and she wrote about it then: "It is a heap of ruins—majestic, but as suggestive as those of the Pharoahs' tombs."

It was, however, in the United States that she really began the work that has made her name well known in Europe, Asia, and America; made her notorious in the eyes of those who dislike all reformers, but great and famous for those who say her works have benefited them. Prior to 1875 she was again investigating the claims of spiritualism in this country, and wrote home then analyzing it, declaring false its assertion that the dead were heard from, and showing that, on the other hand, the phenomena exhibited a great psycho-physiological change going on here, which, if allowed to go on in our present merely material civilization, would bring about great disaster, morally and physically.

Then in 1875, in New York, she started the Theosophical Society, aided by Col. H. S. Olcott and others, declaring its objects to be the making of a nucleus for a universal brotherhood, the study of ancient and other religions and sciences, and the investigation of the psychical and recondite laws affecting man and nature. There certainly was no selfish object in this, nor any desire to raise money. She was in receipt of funds from sources in Russia and other places until they were cut off by reason of her becoming an American citizen, and also because her unremunerated labors for the society prevented her doing literary work on Russian magazines, where all her writings would be taken eagerly. As soon as the Theosophical Society was started she said to the writer that a book had to be written for its use. "Isis Unveiled" was then begun, and unremittingly she worked at it night and day until the moment when a publisher was secured for it.

Meanwhile crowds of visitors were constantly calling at her rooms in Irving place, later in Thirty-fourth street, and last in Forty-seventh street and Eighth avenue. The newspapers were full of her supposed powers or of laughter at the possibilities in man that she and her society asserted. A prominent New York daily wrote of her thus: "A woman of as remarkable characteristics as Cagliostro himself, and one who is every day as differently judged by different people as the renowned Count was in his day. By those who know her slightly she is called a charlatan; better acquaintance made you think she was learned; and those who were intimate with her were either carried away with belief in her power or completely puzzled." "Isis Unveiled" attracted wide attention, and all the New York papers reviewed it, each saying that it exhibited immense research. The strange part of this is, as I and many others can testify as eyewitnesses to the production of the book, that the writer had no library in which to make researches and possessed no notes of investigation or reading previously done. All was written straight out of hand. And yet it is full of references

to books in the British Museum and other great libraries, and every reference is correct. Either, then, we have, as to that book, a woman who was capable of storing in her memory a mass of facts, dates, numbers, titles, and subjects such as no other human being ever was capable of, or her claim to help from unseen beings is just.

In 1878, "Isis Unveiled" having been published, Mme. Blavatsky informed her friends that she must go to India and start there the same movement of the Theosophical Society. So in December of that year she and Col. Olcott and two more went out to India, stopping at London for a while. Arriving in Bombay, they found three or four Hindoos to meet them who had heard from afar of the matter. A place was hired in the native part of the town, and soon she and Col. Olcott started the *Theosophist,* a magazine that became at once well known there and was widely bought in the West.

There in Bombay and later in Adyar, Madras, Mme. Blavatsky worked day after day in all seasons, editing her magazine and carrying on an immense correspondence with people in every part of the world interested in theosophy, and also daily disputing and discussing with learned Hindoos who constantly called. Phenomena occurred there also very often, and later the society for discovering nothing about the psychic world investigated these, and came to the conclusion that this woman of no fortune, who was never before publicly heard of in India, had managed, in some way they could not explain, to get up a vast conspiracy that ramified all over India, including men of all ranks, by means of which she was enabled to produce pretended phenomena. I give this conclusion as one adopted by many. For any one who knew her and who knows India, with its hundreds of different languages, none of which she knew, the conclusion is absurd. The Hindoos believed in her, said always that she could explain to them their own scriptures and philosophies where the Brahmins had lost or concealed the key, and that by her efforts and the work of the society founded through her India's young men were being saved from the blank materialism which is the only religion the West can ever give a Hindoo.

In 1887 Mme. Blavatsky returned to England, and there started another theosophical magazine, called *Lucifer,* and immediately stirred up the movement in Europe. Day and night there, as in New York and India, she wrote and spoke, incessantly corresponding with people everywhere, editing *Lucifer,* and making more books for her beloved society, and never possessed of means, never getting from the world at large anything save abuse wholly undeserved. The "Key to Theosophy" was written in London, and also "The Secret Doctrine," which is the great text book for Theosophists. "The Voice of the Silence" was written there too, and is meant for devotional Theosophists. Writing, writing, writing from morn till night was her fate here. Yet, although scandalized and abused here as elsewhere, she made many devoted friends, for there

never was anything half way in her history. Those who met her or heard of her were always either staunch friends or bitter enemies.

The "Secret Doctrine" led to the coming into the society of Mrs. Annie Besant, and then Mme. Blavatsky began to say that her labors were coming to an end, for here was a woman who had the courage of the ancient reformers and who would help carry on the movement in England unflinchingly. The "Secret Doctrine" was sent to Mr. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to review, but none of his usual reviewers felt equal to it and he asked Mrs. Besant if she could review it. She accepted the task, reviewed, and then wanted an introduction to the writer. Soon after that she joined the society, first fully investigating Mme. Blavatsky's character, and threw in her entire forces with the Theosophists. Then a permanent London headquarters was started and still exists. And there Mme. Blavatsky passed away, with the knowledge that the society she had striven so hard for at any cost was at last an entity able to struggle for itself.

In her dying moment she showed that her life had been spent for an idea, with full consciousness that in the eyes of the world it was Utopian, but in her own necessary for the race. She implored her friends not to allow her then ending incarnation to become a failure by the failure of the movement started and carried on with so much of suffering. She never in all her life made money or asked for it. Venal writers and spiteful men and women have said she strove to get money from so-called dupes, but all her intimate friends know that over and over again she has refused money; that always she has had friends who would give her all they had if she would take it, but she never took any nor asked it. On the other hand, her philosophy and her high ideals have caused others to try to help all those in need. Impelled by such incentive, one rich Theosophist gave her $5,000 to found a working girls' club at Bow, in London, and one day, after Mrs. Besant had made the arrangements for the house and the rest, Mme. Blavatsky, although sick and old, went down there herself and opened the club in the name of the society.

The aim and object of her life were to strike off the shackles forged by priestcraft for the mind of man. She wished all men to know that they are God in fact, and that as men they must bear the burden of their own sins, for no one else can do it. Hence she brought forward to the West the old Eastern doctrines of karma and reincarnation. Under the first, the law of justice, she said each must answer for himself, and under the second make answer on the earth where all his acts were done. She also desired that science should be brought back to the true ground where life and intelligence are admitted to be within and acting on and through every atom in the universe. Hence her object was to make religion scientific and science religious, so that the dogmatism of each might disappear.

Her life since 1875 was spent in the unremitting endeavor to draw within the Theosophical Society those who could work unselfishly to propagate an ethics and philosophy tending to realize the brotherhood of man by showing the real unity and essential non-separateness of every being. And her books were written with the declared object of furnishing the material for intellectual and scientific progress on those lines. The theory of man's origin, powers, and destiny brought forward by her, drawn from ancient Indian sources, places us upon a higher pedestal than that given by either religion or science, for it gives to each the possibility of developing the godlike powers within and of at last becoming a co-worker with nature.

As every one must die at last, we will not say that her demise was a loss; but if she had not lived and done what she did humanity would not have had the impulse and the ideas toward the good which it was her mission to give and to proclaim. And there are to-day scores, nay, hundreds, of devout, earnest men and women intent on purifying their own lives and sweetening the lives of others, who trace their hopes and aspirations to the wisdom-religion revived in the West through her efforts, and who gratefully avow that their dearest possessions are the result of her toilsome and self-sacrificing life. If they, in turn, live aright and do good, they will be but illustrating the doctrine which she daily taught and hourly practised.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

BUSINESS WORTH WHILE

What *seems* to be man, the universe and every atom of it, is an object lesson—a more or less gentle reminder—by which Truth asserts its Self; for Truth is made manifest through partial concealment.

Truth is ONE, infinite and eternal; unchangeable in ITSELF, it assumes many garments when at work.

ILLUSION lies in mistaking these garments for the reality hidden within them.

There is a grain of Truth, an almighty seed, in every man, and it is the *purpose of life* to cultivate it. It is the "pearl of great price"—the "leaven" in the veiled words of Jesus, "which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal."

If the church should at any time see that it conceals more than it reveals of the Truth, it may find consolation in these words of its Master, spoken when there was no church:—

"For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad."

THE SPIRIT IN THE BODY*

For Spirit, when invested with matter or *prakriti,* experienceth the qualities which proceed from *prakriti;* its connection with these qualities is the cause of its rebirth in good and evil wombs. The Spirit in the body is called *Maheswara,* the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramatma,* the highest soul. —Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter XIII.

I THINK your idea of making collations from the Teachers' writings and preparing for work later is all right—the proper thing to do. You will find in yourself the incentive as to time and place, "having eyes and arms and feet in all directions"; an open mind, an eager intellect without doubt or fear, *is* the unveiled spiritual perception. You did a good work with the pamphlets already written; they are in use continually. The idea is to present what is beneficial for humanity in the most presentable form—a simple passing on of what was known before. I gave S—— some of the pamphlets to send to an enquirer for reading and return. They should do good. The energy put in that work has already found many channels of usefulness of the best kind, and they are good for much more—no effort in right direction is lost. Further, it is a labor of love, and the feeling with which you endow your work goes with it. Properly performed, the result is sure. Your latest "The Real Significance," is certainly a "beauty"—W. Q. J. would say, "a dandy"—and its matter bears out its title magnificently. It is the best yet—so full of the most vital truths—things so easily comprehended by the way-farer, and yet so full of the highest wisdom. It does me good.

The introduction is in keeping with the statement below it. In fact we may take as part of our statement of policy, that "The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization; it is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion. The work it has on hand, and the end it keeps in view, are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues."

This is where we stand, and where all true Theosophists should also. If our position is made clear to Theosophists generally, there will be not a few who will see the righteousness of the position. Much of our work in the future will be the presentation of our "platform." We have perceived and given it form; we should let as many as possible know that *it exists for them.* We may have something further to say later on. Good work, keep it up.

Yes, you, too, must find your*selves.* Changed conditions will give occasion. These conditions will be bent to the *great purpose*—

*From the letters of Robert Crosbie. Here published for the first time.

"an' the heart stay steadfast"—and this I do not at all doubt. Make your purpose the Great Purpose, and desire for personal growth will have little breathing space. Back of it all is the Great Lodge, ever watchful, ever working; *never doubt that.*

Theosophists often speak of "getting rid of the personality," and so far as observed, do not appear to have any clear idea of what they mean. Without personalities there would be no field, no evolution. It is not the personality that is in the way, but the personal idea in regard to it—this is particularly fostered by the present civilization based on Samvritti (relative truth), origin of all the world's delusions.

One of the sentences in the last pamphlet applies directly; instead of crushing out the animal nature, *we must learn to fully understand the animal,* and subordinate it to the spiritual. So long as you know the wiles and lures of the elementary nature, you are not in danger of fooling yourselves, however much you may fall under their momentary sway. They or *It,* may be likened to a steed that is perfectly safe when the reins are well in hand and the seat firm, but who is ready to take advantage of any unguarded moment to unhorse you. Such an animal you would naturally watch carefully until he became a part of yourself. If we could always remember that the body, senses and mind (brain) are the steed, and the Self, the rider, the animal would have fewer opportunities to get the bit in his teeth. But we are *learning* to ride and success does not come at once.

From "The Real Significance": "You, too, are messengers, so that it is not well that you should regard much your own infirmities. Nature and Time regard not personalities, but swallow up all alike. Yet do *Nature* and *Time* and *Destiny* teach ever the same great lesson, and he who would learn of these, must both forego and forget personalities, his own as well as others . . . personalities are but the fleeting waves on the river of time caused by the friction of the waves of fortune; they are thy weakness and not *thy strength. Thy strength is in thy soul and thy soul's strength is in the calm* and not in storm revealed."

To forego and forget personalities, means to regard truth only, by whomsoever presented. So it seems wise that we should not think ill of personalities, and this includes our own. If they are our weakness, by doing our duty, which is in our case, the promulgation of truth—pure and undefiled—our weakness will finally become our strength. The Masters do not look at our defects but at our motives and efforts.

I have your letter; you have asked my opinion in regard to a specific matter of action. On general principles one might answer such a question, but in particular cases, where all the elements that enter in, can only be considered fully by the person involved, that person alone is competent to reply, or determine.

In considering a question bearing on the ethics of any case, we have first to be sure that we have no prejudices or preconceptions that can interfere with correct conclusions; in other words "to be free from hard and fast conclusions as to men, things and methods." If we are thus free, we will not be liable to be swayed by the general classifications of good and evil, so common in the world, and the great error of the churches. The way is then opened for the real point at issue, which to me is *not* what is done, but *why* was it done—the motive. Now who can answer this but the one who acts? If the act appears to him as a duty, and a proper one, he alone has paramount power and there should be none to question a right to perform duty as it is seen and understood. It might very well be that another's acts would be improper for us, because of our different attitude; it might also be that our acts, seemingly proper to us, would to that other seem improper.

From these considerations it would seem fair to deduce that the only correct sanction, and the one we should seek, would come from within.

Of course different attitudes of mind produce different actions in any given case. Those who have knowledge will not act from the same motive as those who have less knowledge or none. Those who have no knowledge act under the impulse of the common attitude or way of doing things. Those who are wise, naturally take all possible results into consideration from Their wider point of view, before acting. With Them it is largely a question of duty, unswayed by what the views of others may be, except in so far as those views might interfere with larger duties and influence at other times. So many things have to be taken into consideration, in fact, that can be seen and applied by the person alone who is involved, that no direct answer can be given in any particular case. General principles may be stated, and each individual left to apply them as he sees fit. In no other way can progress be made.

We have finally, in any case, to determine whether we are swayed by inclination rather than plain duty, in order that we may not deceive ourselves.

Whatever, then, is decided in all honesty with ourselves, is our duty, and no man is our judge.

Love to you. Be honest; be true; be fearless. As ever.

. . . To see the true man who once inhabited the subject which lies before him, on the dissecting table, the surgeon must use other eyes than those of his body. So, the glorious truth covered up in the hieratic writings of the ancient papyri can be revealed only to him who possesses the faculty of intuition—which, if we call reason the eye of the mind, may be defined as the eye of the soul.

Isis Unveiled, Vol. I, p. 16.

CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE*

SINCE the forties of last century Spiritualists have affirmed the answer to this question, claiming sufficient evidence for the survival of intelligence after the state known as death. But Spiritualism is not a new thing. Five hundred years or more ago, and 'way back through every age of man, people have practised what is called *Bhut* worship,—that is, worship of the spirits of the dead. Present day Spiritualism is but a repetition of a former error, even though its resurrection has been among those whom we would call of higher intelligence, "deep thinkers," and men of science. The "communications" of to-day, just like those others all down the ages, bear nothing whatever in them of a truly spiritual nature; they are physical to the last degree, as the communications to Sir Oliver Lodge from his son, Raymond (*through a medium,* remember), bear witness. According to his statement, his life after death is very much like the one he has left behind: people there still drink and smoke cigars, and, in fact (?) have cigars made for them in spirit-factories out of cigar stuff belonging to that state of matter. If that is a "spiritual" communication, anybody is welcome to take it as such, but it only goes to show that when we are out of physical life we are not necessarily in a spiritual state—as is the common supposition.

The question is, what do we *learn* from such "communications"? Is there anything, or has there ever come anything from the plane of spiritualistic communication which has been of any benefit to mankind? Has anything from that source shown us the great purpose for which we are here? Does it tell us the meaning of *life;* why there appears to be so much injustice in the world? Does it tell us of wars that are to be, and how to prevent various great catastrophes from falling upon us? Does it inform us as to the connection or common cause of all the different beings in the world? Does it show us the nature of the becoming of beings who are greater than we are, as well as of beings lower than we are? Does it show why and how this solar system came into existence, and the laws which rule it? NO. These are all matters on which we need knowledge; yet, from so-called "spirits" we get all sorts of differing communications as a basis for reasoning in regard to them, and those very differences should show us that there is no source of knowledge in that quarter. What we need is not what any "spirit" or anybody else *says* about anything, but rather, a reasonable, logical, just statement of laws which *each and every person can test out for himself.*

Let us consider the presentment of Theosophy as to how man has become what he now is—the real story of evolution, as gained

---

* From the stenographic report of a talk by Robert Crosbie. Here published for the first time.—EDITORS.

by observation and experience in the vast ages that have passed. The basis underlying that evolution is the same in every human being, in every human heart, in every animal life, in every speck of matter—the same Spirit in all, the same One Life, the One Intelligence. All are rays from that One Life, that One Intelligence, and each expresses the possibilities existing in the Infinite Source. Differences in beings, in mankind, in various races all mean degrees of intelligence, for each has the same power as the highest being and the same power as all beings; only the use or employment of the power brings about an instrument to represent it more or less fully. Evolution is Spirit expressing itself, whether in this solar system, or in those which preceded it. Intelligence was behind the beginning of this planet in its nebulous condition, or fire mist; intelligence was behind the cooling and hardening processes through many, many ages. In all those states and in all those substances connected with this planet we also have existed as spiritual beings, nor are they absent from us now. At the end of every life, we go back through all those stages again to the highest one, and then descend again to the earthly stage to reap the effects of causes set in motion by us before in other bodies. For there is no transforming power in death; as a tree falls, so must it lie. It is during the life-time that we must recognize and awaken our true natures. Death opens no door to knowledge.

There is proof of these states of consciousness being ours right within our nightly experience. When we sleep,—though *we* never sleep; only the body sleeps,—the consciousness of this physical plane is gone from us. We have no idea of what is going on among our friends or relatives; we have not one slightest sensation of what is going on anywhere on the earth while we are not using the body. Here is "death"—a smaller, temporary death—for the body. Then we pass into another state altogether, which we know as the dreaming state. The human soul goes on in dream knowing himself as the one there, seeing, smelling, hearing, talking, moving and doing all other things which he does while in the body awake. Well, they used to say that if you took hold of a sleeper's great toe he would talk to you. You would get a communication from a "spirit," but what kind of a communication would it be? The man would tell you just what his own mind had worked with; he would not know in the dreaming state any more than his own personal thoughts, his own personal ideas and activities.

Applying this analogy to the time of death, we can see that in reality the time of death never comes. We give up this body for good and the body goes back to the earth from which it was taken; but WE are not dead. We are still alive. We are still conscious on other planes and in other degrees, though we are not using the body nor the brain. But what kind of a consciousness, what kind of an intelligence are we using? Just the same kind that we had when we were in the body. Our thoughts and feelings and desires

go on acting for a time just as they did when we were using the body, because of the energy we had put into them. As there is no renewal of it, that energy wears itself out, and the man—as a real spiritual being—enters into quite another state, where no one on earth can disturb the action of his intelligence and the enjoyment of his bliss. How could that be a state of bliss if for one single instant it could be disturbed by the sorrows left behind on earth? Or could there be a worse hell to some people than seeing from their "heaven" the appeasing of a husband's sorrow and the place of mother taken by another? We should understand that when a human being passes out of life, he passes through something like the dream state—a mixed state—and then reaches the best state he is capable of expressing. A spiritual human being, it would be folly to imagine otherwise, could not be disturbed by earthly doings, for his mission on earth was fulfilled when he left it. But he would come back again in another body to take up another day's work. Then, can you not see that all this idea of communication with so-called "spirits" who have left the body is *nonsense?*

Let us not imagine that there are no other beings besides men outside the body. Let us not imagine that dead men, or living dead men, are the only ones existent on the other side of this physical world. There are myriads of kinds of beings who do not live in bodies like ours but inhabit planes into which men pass from this earth. Right contiguous to our plane all sorts of beings, sub-men, as well as human elementals dwell. Can we imagine these are desirable communicants? And how can we be sure that any external communication is not connected with some devilish spirit who likes to pose, who likes to take the cast-off clothing of man because of its attraction to his nature and desires and exploit it to us? A great deal of knowledge is required to understand the real nature of man, nor is it arrived at by any kind of "communication" whatever, but by entering into our own natures. The Father in secret is within, not without, and everything we know or ever will know has to be known in ourselves and by ourselves. Never from other people, never from any other kind of spirit will it be known. The Spirit of God within every one—the Knower in every one—is the last resort, the highest tribunal, the last eminence that we shall reach.

We are now traveling through earth matter, but when we leave the earth, we leave alone. So, when we travel through astral-matter, we are not confabulating with the denizens of the astral plane but are moving along our own lines. The states after death are merely the *effects* of the life last lived. We step through from the place of our endeavor to reap what we have sown,—first casting off the evil, and then, experiencing the highest and best of all our aspirations. In all of those states, each one realizes himself to be the same person; never for an instant does it enter one's perception, or consciousness, that he is any other than the one who

was on earth; nor does he know that any such thing as death has ocurred at all. In his highest state he has with him all those whom he loved, and in just that condition which he would desire to have for them. He has his bliss, because the balance between cause and effect, even for his sufferings on earth, is struck straight and true for the spirit. All those states are within us, not outside; in those states, we meet first, last, and all the time OURSELVES, first as we think we are, and finally as we really are.

There is no possibility of any communication from a "dead" person to a living one, except perhaps in the very short period before the real individual has shaken off the ideas held during life. Sometimes then a very, very strong desire to impart something will effect some sort of communication, but after the great change known as "the second death" all connection with earth is broken off. A pure-minded living person by his aspiration and love may *himself ascend* to a heavenly place and there seem to speak and feel and be with those he loved, but that speaking and feeling does not disturb the one there. The very essence of the spiritual state would exclude all disturbance, though we can obtain the kinds of feeling which exist in that condition. All that a medium obtains are simply reflections and repetitions of what has occurred recorded in the nature of the sitter. A medium will describe the after death state of a person very much *alive,* which should show how subject to mistakes and errors a medium is. In the passive mediumistic state there is no control over anything; there is merely a channel provided through which certain things can come or "leak."

The great "spiritual" communicants of the mediums are suicides and the victims of "accidental" death. For not always is there death when the body dies. Unless the death coincides with the end of the life-term which is fixed at birth a man is still tied to earth until the end of his term.

But there are cases of communications with beings in the world—almost within the realm of this world—beings not in physical bodies, who live and move on another plane of being, far, far away from connection with some easy going medium. These beings are known as Nirmanakayas; they are men who have become perfected—who could if they chose reach up to and hold the very highest state of bliss, but who refuse that bliss because it would mean forever to forsake all chance of helping their fellow-men. They can, when the nature of the person is true and aspiring strongly, communicate when it is necessary to help him. But there is no mistake about these communications. They are personal, meant for that one as direct help. It is *the within* which induces any outside help that we receive. It is a recognition of the spiritual nature of ourselves and all beings which makes the true connection. It is from the spiritual that all true strength comes. And it is for the perfection of humanity that all the Divine Incarnations have labored.

STRAY MEMORANDA

ON ASTROLOGY—FROM W. Q. J.

THEOSOPHISTS too often occupy themselves with these woful lookings into the future, to the detriment of their present work. They should try to discover the fine line of duty and endeavor, leaving the astrologers of to-day, *who are more at sea than any other mystics,* to con over a zodiac that is out of place and calculate with tables which delude with the subtle power that figures have to lie when the basis of calculation is wrong.

. . . I will not assume to fully describe planetary influence, since to do so would lead us into realms quite beyond our comprehension. But we will get a better idea of the subject by recollecting that the ancients always considered the "ambient"—or entire heaven—at birth, as being that which affected man, and that planets were only the pointers or indices showing when and where the influence of the "ambient" would be felt. The modern astrologers, following those great leaders, but unable to grasp the enormous subject, reduced the scheme to the *influences of planets.* They have thus come to leave out, to a great extent, influences cast by powerful stars, which often produce effects not to be sought for under planets: "When such stars have rule nor wise nor fool can stay their influence." The planets were held, rightly as I think, to be only foci for "the influence of the whole ambient," having however a power of their own of a secondary nature exercisable when the ambient influence was weak.

When London was burnt a mighty star—not a planet—had rule, and Napoleon was prefigured by a star also, his fall being due in fact to the aspect of the heavens *as a whole,* and not to the ruling of Wellington's significator. A slight accident might have thrown the power of the latter out of the horary field. Similarly, the cyclic vicissitudes of this globe will not be shown by any planetary scheme, but by certain *stars* that fix the destiny of poor Earth. When they have their day and term the wise man will be unable to rule his own stars or any others.

Say, my friend, remember that title: The Cause of Sublime Perfection. That is the name of Theosophy. Opposed to the idea of inherent sinfulness, it may work a change. Use the title now and then. So will I. Those three—(a) Perfectibility of Humanity; (b) Cause of Sublime Perfection; (c) Masters are living facts, and not cold abstractions—should be well spread abroad. They pulverize the awful wrong of inherent sin, they raise a hope in every man above a sot, they illuminate the sky of the future. We work for the future—oh, the glorious future!

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

ON THE LOOKOUT

"BACK TO BLAVASKY"

The leading article in the January issue of *The Messenger,* official organ of the American section of the Theosophical Society (Besant), is entitled, "Is Theosophy Based on Science or Revelation?" The article, which is distinctly jesuitical in tone and method, is written by Irving S. Cooper, himself a "Bishop" of the "Liberal Catholic Church." Mr. Cooper directs attention to the menacing aspects of the "Back to Blavatsky" movement in the Theosophical Society, arguing that it embodies a reactionary policy and is a "reversion towards orthodoxy, naked and unmistakable, the setting up of an infallible authority combined with an actual persecution of those who disagree." He writes:

> "But, it may be urged, there is surely no persecution of others on the part of those who follow H. P. B. Is there not? ——— during the last five years has spent much time investigating the hidden side of the sacraments, services and festivals of the Christian Church. The results of these investigations are exactly as much a part of theosophical knowledge as are any other discoveries made by him, Mrs. Besant or Madame Blavatsky. The conclusions, however, to which these results lead, and even the results of the investigations themselves, were not acceptable to a certain number of our members because *they seemed to go beyond what H. P. B. taught.* (Italics ours—Editors THEOSOPHY). Accordingly these members began to undermine Bishop ———'s standing as an investigator. . . . Hence logically, since Mrs. Besant supports Bishop ———, she is also misleading the members—therefore back to Blavatsky."

There is more to similar effect, the evident purpose of the writer being to develop the idea that Theosophy is a growing, or *progressive* system; that it has developed since the days of H. P. B.; that it is reactionary and unbrotherly to hold any other opinion; that those who "like best" the teachings of H. P. B. should study them; that others who "like best" the teachings of Mrs. Besant should move along that line; that still others who "like best" the writings of some other student should pursue that path. "It is the principle of tolerance and open-mindedness that I am urging," writes Mr. Cooper, "not the acceptance of a group of ideas put forward by any personality."

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

For Heaven's sake what does Mr. Cooper suppose Theosophy is? Is it a speculation, a changing system of thought? Does its validity depend upon the lucubrations or interpretations of any student, "Bishop" or otherwise? Is it something that can be added to or taken from? Is it something with which our "liking best," or our dislike, has anything to do? Or is it what H. P. B. Herself said it is:

> "The Secret Doctrine (or Wisdom-Religion) is not a series of vague theories or treatises, but is all that can be given out in this century. It will be centuries before much more is given."

Or what William Q. Judge said:

"It (Theosophy) is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical and intellectual constituents of nature and of man."

Again, Masters wrote of the *Secret Doctrine* that it was Their work. Furthermore, They went on record that They approved in general all that H. P. B. wrote, said or did. Theosophy, then, is the accumulated wisdom of the ages, the truth about all things and beings; a record of the laws and processes of evolutionary growth, together with many applications of, and logical deductions from, the mathematical statements of those laws and processes. And whenever any writings are put forth as "theosophical" which contradict and subvert the teachings of the *Secret Doctrine,* they are nothing else than a fraud, whether that fraud be conscious or otherwise on the part of its perpetrator.

There is *Theosophy itself.* There are, alas, the many interpretations of Theosophy by students of greater or less proficiency and understanding, who draw attention to their own lucubrations as "progressed" Theosophy, and to themselves who have "progressed" farther, and thus know more than the original Teacher. If these student writings were not put forward as "theosophical," the "Back to Blavatsky" movement would have no need for existence. But they are so advanced, either directly or indirectly, and readers are invited to consider the greatness of the writers. Thus, members of Mrs. Besant's Society who are acquainted to some extent with *Theosophy itself,* as set forth in the works of H. P. B., see in the writings and practices of present day "authorities" that which is tangential to the true teaching —yes, and in some cases its exact opposite—and are urging the necessity of a return to the Source.

KNOWLEDGE IS CONSISTENT

Theosophy has never been put forth as a dogma, but as a relation of facts, gathered through observation and experience, which anyone can accept or reject without condemnation or praise. One might as well call the only exact science we use, Mathematics, dogmatic or a dogma, because it is presented as an assemblage of facts which the student can study, apply and prove for himself. Theosophy stands in exactly the same position; a presentation of Knowledge gained through aeons of time; it is not to be confounded with the speculations of *any* of its students, who at best are subject to their personal prejudices, predilections and weaknesses. It should be clearly understood that all theosophical writers or leaders—except Those who brought Theosophy to the world—are students of more or less proficiency in the Science, and are therefore liable to misconceptions and erroneous applications, and that the only possibility of discerning such errors lies in *a comparison with the Science as originally presented.*

Another point, if a teaching is synthetic and true, it must be consistent. So also must the true Teacher be consistent. Theosophy, as given by H. P. B., is consistent throughout. Theosophy, as given by William Q. Judge, is consistent throughout—*and consistent with the Theosophy of H. P. B.* Let us see how consistent Mrs. Besant is—how the Annie Besant of 1891 agrees with the Annie Besant of 1920 on this same subject of Theosophy and Christianity which is agitating Mr. Cooper and his brethren of the "Liberal Catholic Church." Mrs. Besant used to express herself sternly and unequivocally. There was nothing evasive about her speech or writings, nothing to "interpret"; she stood squarely in one camp or the other, never precariously attempting to balance upon the dividing line. In *Lucifer* for October, 1891, in the leading article, entitled, "Theosophy and Christianity," she writes:

"Now the Theosophical Society has no creed. . . . But THEOSOPHY is a body of knowledge, clearly and distinctly formulated in part and proclaimed to the world. . . . Now by Theosophy I mean the "Wisdom Religion," or the "Secret Doctrine," and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. BLAVATSKY. Knowing what she taught, we can recognize fragments of the same teachings in other writings, but her message remains for us the test of Theosophy everywhere. As we learn, we verify some of its more elementary portions, and so—if need be—we may increase our confidence in the Messenger. Also it is open to every student only to accept as he verifies, and to hold his judgment in suspension as to anything that does not approve itself to his reason, or as to all that he has not yet proven. Only, none of us has any right to put forward his own views as "Theosophy," in conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from her. When she says "The Secret Doctrine teaches," none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but it remains "The Secret Doctrine," or Theosophy; she always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented difference of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation "The Secret Doctrine *is* so-and-so."

And then Mrs. Besant lays down verbatim a brief statement of the Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine, in the words of H. P. B. and proceeds to show how totally at variance Theosophy is with the teachings of the Christian Church—its "vicarious atonement," "forgiveness of sins," "Heaven," "Hell," etc. She ends with these words, significant indeed in the light of present day developments within the Besant Society:

"Theosophists have it in charge not to whittle away the Secret Doctrine for the sake of propitiating the Christian churches that have forgotten CHRIST, any more than they may whittle it away for the sake of propitiating Materialistic Science. Steadily, calmly, without anger but also without fear, they must stand by the Secret Doctrine as she gave it, who carried unflinchingly through the storms of well-nigh seventeen years the torch of Eastern Wisdom. The condition of success is perfect loyalty; let the churches climb to the Wisdom Religion, for it cannot descend to them."

THE PRESENT POSITION—

And now to turn to the Annie Besant of 1920. In *The Theosophist* of March, 1920, she prints a signed article, "Letter to the T. S. on the Liberal Catholic Church." It is as weak and equivocal as the foregoing is strong and clear—a plea in avoidance which leaves one feeling that she really favors the L. C. C. but lacks the courage to take a definite stand, in an effort to "stand well" with both the church party and those members of the Society who are trying to make the organization a vehicle of expression of the Wisdom Religion, as the name "Theosophical Society" would indicate it to be. She begins with an appeal to Brotherhood, and then writes:

"The Old Catholic Church is an interesting historical movement, which kept to the Catholicism of the Roman Obedience without some of the modern addenda, and preserved the Apostolic Succession,* as did the Anglican Church when it tore itself away from obedience to the Roman See. The entry into it of many Christian Theosophists has liberalised it without touching its Catholic character, and the English-speaking members prefer the name of Liberal Catholic. The Liberal Catholic

*On this subject of "Apostolic Succession" H. P. B. says (*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, page 544): " . . . the apostolic succession is a gross and palpable fraud."

Church is a sub-division of the Church Catholic, and undoubtedly has a great future before it. The accession to it of our loved Theosophical teacher, ————, (Mrs. Besant here prints the name of that "Bishop" in whose defence Mr. Cooper's article in *The Messenger* is written), who was a High Church Anglican Priest when he joined the Theosophical Society, and who has since been consecrated Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, has naturally strengthened it; he has brought to it the knowledge of the unseen world that the early Bishops possessed, and the great Christian ritual purged of later accretions, now shines out in its true beauty and inspiring power. To the Christians in our Society this presentment of the Christian faith, in its highest and truest form, is invaluable. . . . "

" . . . Unthinking people regard the word 'Catholic' as equivalent to Papalism, and as indicating the Roman Obedience only, forgetting that the Anglican Church is also Catholic, as is shown by its creeds. Hence the very name 'Old Catholic' or 'Liberal Catholic' aroused angry antagonism among the ignorant. The fact that I have not myself joined that Church has, I fear, been unfairly used against it by some; I do not belong to any religious denomination, for the only one which, by my past, is my natural expression is closed against me by my birth in the West. But I regard the Liberal Catholic Church with the same loving and reverent sympathy as that with which I regard all subdivisions of the great religions. Others claim that I 'approve it.' I have not the impertinence to 'approve' any branch of a great religion. The Jagat-Guru, the Guardian of all religions, blesses all of them; who am I, that I should 'approve' that which He has blessed? I seek to serve them all equally, since He is the Sustainer of them all and His Life flows into them all. I study them all, and feel the keenest interest in the ceremonies of all, if so be that I may learn from any of them something which I do not know."

An appeal to brotherhood, a "broad" and favorable emplacement of Catholicism, an affirmation of the knowledge of a putative "Bishop," a reference to her own knowledge of her past, an assumption of intimacy with some great being unknown to the *hoi polloi*—and then the heroic stand, "who am I, that I should 'approve' that which He has blessed?" After reading it, the Members will all be quite satisfied that Mrs. Besant is a great and beneficent person—"so broad, you know!" She was not quite so "broad" in 1891, but she was unequivocal; she "stood" for something and was not slow to say so.

If Theosophists recognize that the world has gone mad on personalities, can it be made sane by glossing over that madness or pleading expediency? They know it can not. But they are the creatures of their generation and have not the courage to do that which puts personality out of court in their own cases, and sets the example of a truer, less selfish line of effort. Yet if the change is to be brought about, someone must make the beginning; it is the first step that begins the count, and if the goal is a right and true one, the results can be left to time and Karma. The "Back to Blavatsky" movement is a first step. More power to it!